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This is what radical democracy looks like! Reclaiming urban space in Vienna

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Introduction

On the first of Mai 2009 more than 2000 people gathered together at the "Marcus Omofuma"-Memorial stone in the centre of Vienna for a protest march in memorial of the Nigerian citizen Marcus Omofuma, who had suffocated during his deportation in May 1999 due to the fact that the police tied him up and covered his mouth with tape. The demonstrators followed a route through the inner city districts, in which they passed by the austrian parliament to protest against racist immigration laws, as well as a place nearby the Viennese Opera, where in 2004 Nicolae J., a Romanian citizen got shot by the police. The protest march ended in the Viennese "Stadtpark", where the Mauretanian physicist Seibane Wague was killed in 2003 during a police action. The organisers of the protest march mostly belonged to autonomous migrants' initiatives and non-migrant autonomous action groups and the demonstration at the 1ˢᵗ May 2009 can be denominated as benchmark at the end of a decade of transnational anti-racist urban protest politics in Vienna.

In recent years urban social movement studies have paid much attention to the emergence of transnational urban protest networks and politics. I discuss these developments with reference to Left-wing urban protest in Vienna, focusing on autonomous protest politics and its transformations within the last decade. During this period the "glocal" dimension of urban protest - i.e. its local impact and its interconnection with economic, social but also discursive shifts on a global scale - are increasingly in focus of autonomous street politics. On the other hand, the decade also reflects specific struggles within austrian urban protest, which are related to the national post-Nazistic setting. Starting with a theoretical discussion, I combine critical approaches of urban theory and movement research that focus both on urban social movements and their impact as collective political actors. I refer to the Marxist-informed *critical urban theory* that reflects a *materiaistl point of view*. This approach is matched with a *discursive and cultural studies´ perspective* on social movements, introduced by scholars working on *radical democracy*. Both theoretical

approaches are briefly described and right off linked to the autonomous political action scene in Vienna, discussed as *radical democratic public with spatial implications*. Following the introduction of the two approaches their intersections are illustrated. This novel perspective on urban protest aims to bring together its material/ist and discursive groundings and thus points to the intermingling of the material/ist and discursive embedment of urban protest. In a concluding section, the last decade of Viennese protest politics is illustrated from this integrated theoretical perspective on urban protest. Thereby, a special focus is given to the transforming content of protest, mediated via demonstrations and other public political interventions. It is in such Temporary Autonomous Protest Zones, where political protest gets articulated and visible on the street and they thus constitute a "lynchpin" that connects counter-hegemonic political discourse and practice with the broader urban public. The description of changing political topics in such temporary protest zones shall illustrate how the discursive/symbolic and the material converge in counter-hegemonic spaces formed by a political counter public. Furthermore, the illustration of the contents of the protest aims to indicate the important role of autonomous urban protest, in pointing to and revealing societal antagonisms.

The Right to the Protest City - reclaiming and producing counter-hegemonic urban space:

"Critical urban theory" refers to leftist urban theory, which is mostly associated with debates around the Right to the City. It focuses on the ´politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested (...) character of urban space´, which is analysed as the ´outcome of historically specific relations of social power´ (Brenner 2009: 198). It is an interventionist approach, which aims to use theoretical analysis as point of origin for criticism and political action, rather than producing urban theory as an end in itself.

 When theorising counter-politics in the ´urban fabric´ critical urban theorists refer to Lefebvre, who defines urban space as a node where social transformations and conflicts are condensed and spaces of resistance are constructed. Such transformations of utopia into space and of counter hegemonic political thought into practice correspond to the Foucauldian notion of ´heterotopia´ (Foucault 1986: 25ff). Lefebvre further conceptualizes

such counter-hegemonic spaces of resistance as ´appropriated spaces´; i.e. as spaces lying outside capitalist modes of production and reproduction, as spaces which are of "use" rather than of commodified value to the people using and thereby producing them. Due to the incompatibility of ´use value´ and commodified ´exchange value´, these spaces are object of constant social conflict (Lefebvre 1991: 59f). The autonomous space production of squatted social centres in Northern European cities clearly reflects the distinction between commodification of space and used spaces. Such heterotopian spaces are allocated throughout the Viennese urban fabric and constitute what Deleuze/Guattari (1977) call a ´rhizome´ of counter-spaces. Since the 1980ies there have been several waves of struggles concerning these autonomous spaces, which make the mentioned social conflicts over space visible.

In his thoughts on ´spaces of hope´ Harvey calls counter-hegemonic and anti-capitalist venues ´spatiotemporal utopias´ (Harvey 2000: 182ff). Also according to Harvey's definition, such heterotopias are mostly fixed, but do not necessarily have to be. Being fixed or temporary, it is in these sites where critical urban theory, as formulated by Harvey or by Mayer, Marcuse and Brenner (2009), is translated into political practice and turns into space(s). Reflecting about the meaning and content of critical urban theoretical approaches, Marcuse (2009) and Brenner (2009) refer to the necessary transgression of capitalist societies and thus to Critical Theory formulated by the Frankfurt School as source of their criticism. Urban movements' political potential is theorised and emphasis is given to the need to link critical theoretical approaches to direct political action and to ´illuminate ongoing and emergent socio-political struggles´ via critical research.

In this view urban social movements are analysed to struggle for the appropriation of urban space in order to express criticism and to develop political and economic alternatives that are linked to counter-hegemonic social and cultural everyday practices. The focus on everyday life and its interconnection with politics is one of the principles of autonomous politics and it is intertwined with the named spatial dimension of the rhizomatic network of counter-hegemonic political spaces in Vienna. Albeit embedded in the specific austrian context, the autonomous scene is also located and acting within a globalized – or to put it in activists´ words – transnational political setting. Critical urban theory addresses this fact when pointing to the ´*glocality*´ of new social movements and movement politics. Taking an explicitly regulation theoretical stance, Mayer (1998, 2003) analyses changes of

movement politics against the background of the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist urban regimes within highly industrialized Western European countries. In doing that she highlights the increasing precarisation of working conditions and the ongoing transnationalisation of the workforce. Autonomous reactions to these changes are clearly reflected in Viennese urban protest politics, for example in upcoming topics such as the development of MayDay activism since 2005, which seeks to hegemonize a new conceptualisation of the working class as the "precarious". Contemporaneously, the focus on anti-racist action and protest against the "Fortress Europe" is rising and currently leading to massive direct actions against deportations.

Concerning the discussion of transnational anti-racist protest Sassens analysis provides an interesting theoretical framework. The author regards highly industrialised European cities as nodes, where transnational living and working environments are concentrated and politicised; in her analysis ´immigrant workforce´ currently appears as new potential political actor (Sassen 2001: IV). Mayer critically adds to this assessment that it does not consider two crucial perspectives: First, it does not analyse sufficiently the changing urban policies and the related political opportunity structures, which vary considerably between different cities in the global North. Second, it does not look empirically at the post-colonial struggles themselves and leaves them a kind of ´black box´ (Mayer 2003: 279f). This criticism points to the analytical (and political) potential of a synthesis of critical urban studies and radical democratic movement research. Such an integrated view would allow it to estimate the role and impact of urban movements and open the path for developing political strategies. In my view this aim constitutes also the main common denominator of the materialist approach of critical urbanism and the radical democratic approach, which is rooted in cultural studies and discourse analysis and provides the possibility to integrate a view on urban movements that focuses explicitly on the locally embedded political culture and the specific content of protest politics.

Radical Democratic Perspectives on Political Counter Publics:

The development of radical democratic theory is strongly linked to the European urban movement history of the twentieth century. From the beginning of the century and rapidly increasing since the 1950s, a large number of different urban social movements emerge in Western and Southern European countries and among Left-wing scholars these urban

movements evoke an increasing interest in the analysis of their democratic potentials as collective political actors. Since the autonomous political action scene in Vienna is to be defined as subcultural part of austrian social movements, it is discussed from a radical democratic and a cultural studies´ perspective. Autonomous austrian movement history after the Second World War is concentrating on radical criticism and the development of counter-hegemonic cultural and political practices. It is rooted in subcultural and artistic clamours against the disciplinary society during the 1950ies and the 1960ies and is transformed into decidedly political protest with the emergence of ecological protests during the 1970ies. Contemporaneously, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist protest develops and culminates in the emergence of a vital autonomous subculture in Vienna during the 1980ies.

The radical democratic notion of a potential "movement society", urging "globalization and democratization from below" (della Porta & Diani, 2006: 1f), labels the debates about the democratic task of urban social movements. Laclau/Mouffe (1985) provide a theoretical framework to classify the phenomenon social movements from a discursive perspective and develop the concept of ´radical democracy´ to denominate pluralistic movement politics as collective democratic and political action. Principally, the radical democratic approach focuses on the "broadening and deepening" of democratic practices throughout society via revealing its antagonisms (Demirovic, 2005: 59) and in this view urban social movements perform the task to express such antagonistic positions via their specific radical criticism. They articulate - identity politically shaped - emancipatory alternatives and develop counter-hegemonic cultural and economic practices, in order to transcend capitalism - together with all other –isms. Such movements' claims are constituted by the fact that a liberal-democratic state would not raise antagonistic political issues and standpoints, because systemic power cannot be (or: is not) directed against itself. In other words: a liberal democratic state would always uphold liberal economic structures and this is exactly why it would never be able to denominate and combat societal antagonisms induced by capitalism, if such politics does not fit into the project of maintaining the (neo-)liberal nation-state – on the material(ist) as well as on the symbolic level (Holloway, 2002). Melucci thus stresses that it is urban social movements, which express public demands through collective action in creating a "public space of

representation" (1996: 221); and it is this notion of a "public space of representation" is what could be called a "radical democratic public".

A crucial process regarding the development of movements is the "articulation" of a counter-culture, or in other words: the discursive production of political collectives via the hegemonisation of shared values and their condensation in a sort of shared "political utopia". It is again Melucci (1996) who develops a theoretical approach that corresponds to radical democratic theorizing but emphasises the understanding of social movements as political and *cultural* collective. Such analysis holds perfectly true for the autonomous/anarchist subculture which is - as the term indicates – a culture, i.e. a "whole way of life" with identificatory potential, circling around questions of "autonomy" and "liberty" (Mümken, 2005). As soon as the Viennese autonomous scene emerges during the 1980ies it articulates – still existing - anarchist or autonomous subcultural values and orientations. These shared values and convictions can be denominated as *"anti-state", "anti-racist", "anti-sexist", "anti-capitalist", "anti-hierarchical"* and – in parts - *"anti-anti-Semitic"*. The "political utopia" in the autonomous political action scene at present could be denominated as the idea of a "free association" based on shared "autonomous" convictions and values like the above-mentioned anti-definitions. Since the national setting influences the issues of counter politics, anti-fascist action with a focus on anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism and austrian past politics, always plays a crucial role and the autonomous scene in Vienna focuses on the analysis of anti-Semitism: The criticism regarding the austrian involvement in the Nazi-regime as well as the struggle concerning past and present anti-Semitism within radical Left-wing politics is a particular feature of post-Nazistic protest politics. In this context, an inner-movement struggle concerning the criticism of anti-Semitism within the radical Left has been at stake during the last decade of movement politics and is to be analysed as specific for the national post-nazistic context. Despite its importance, this special focus of urban protest is mainly addressed from a radical democratic and cultural studies´ perspective (see f.i. Sternfeld 2006). Albeit not negating the importance of anti-fascist activism, the empirical focus of this concrete text lies on transnational anti-racist protest formations that emerged during the last decade, which are connected to discursive and material shifts on a hegemonic political level.

In summary, autonomous activists position themselves with reference to hegemonic and subculture-related political discourses and the subculture can be defined as micro-field of

political discourse, where struggles for hegemony, articulation and also identity politics play a role. Furthermore, the autonomous scene is a field of counter-hegemonic political information and practice; or, in other words, a radical democratic field of action. However, the mere discursive radical democratic approach lacks considerations about *how* such radical democratic practices or forms of bargaining could and should look like. Approaches that attempt to close this gap combine the notion of radical democracy with a cultural studies´ point of view and elaborate the notion of a radical democratic representational space further in relating it to the empirical analysis of urban protest politics (Marchart 2004, Marchart et al. 2006). The authors draw on Laclau/Mouffe´s hegemonic model when pointing to the democratic potential of new social movements and connect protest politics to a possible new (European) democratic culture. This perspective mainly emanates from the conclusion that the notion of radical democracy should be combined with the empirical exploration of social movement's concrete discursive and social practices.

Radical democratic approaches emphasize the democratisation potential of urban protest and the necessity to focus on the specific content of urban protest. Besides this, however, the discursive and cultural studies-influenced approach also recognizes more and more the importance of the spatial component of radical democratic politics and starts to explore political space appropriation and space production (Gerbaudo 2009; Hamm 2002). Indeed austrian anarchist subculture "materialises" in autonomous political social practices and autonomous spaces and Temporary Autonomous Zones such as demonstrations, parades, public parties, political interventions within the public etc., which are created by autonomous "body politics" (Müller 2008).

Generally, the mentioned authors – be it critical urban or radical democratic theorists - share the view that urban social movements or urban subcultural scenes are political actors with the ability to reveal dissent within society, itself rooted in unequal power relations and social inequalities within capitalist liberal democracies. I argue that there are common interests and theoretical crossing points between the two approaches, which could allow for an approach integrating *material/ist, spatial* and *cultural* aspects of urban protest politics and could be fruitful for further discussion and political action.

Julia Edthofer

Towards Integrated Perspectives on Urban Protest: Theorising Intersections of the Material and the Symbolic:

Despite differing views there is a common political interest in counter-hegemonic politics as well as intersecting theoretical and empirical foci of critical urban and radical democratic approaches and these intersections are discussed in the following.

As *first overlap* it is to be stressed that both approaches work on and relate to urban social movements and build on Gramsci to theorize the role of civil society and movement politics. The Marxist oriented approach of critical urban theorists uses Gramsci to work on symbolic or discursive influences on movements and protest. Post-Marxist radical democratic approaches synthesize the discursive hegemonic approach with cultural and questions of identification in movement (identity) politics. This observation leads to the *second point of contact*, which concerns the discussion of identity and identification within protest politics. When critical urban theory addresses how movements bind people emotionally to political aims (or identifications), the mere materialist perspective gets explicitly widened to include cultural studies´ approaches. In developing her analysis of ´global cities´, Sassen f. i. refers to the possibility for new political formations and transnational forms of organizing. In doing that she refers to Stuart Hall and his work on the establishment of a post-colonial counter-hegemonic political discourse and interconnected collective political identities (Hall 1991; Sassen 2001: V). The *third point of common interest* relates to the shared focus on the "glocal" transformations of urban protest politics. Marchart, for example, in his discussion of recent austrian radical democratic movement politics, strongly emphasises transnational transformations initiated by anti-globalisation or alter-mondialisation movement(s) from a Gramscian hegemonic perspective. Crucial milestones concerning the development of the "Alter-Globalisation Movement" in this view would date back to the end of the 1990ies and analyse the "Battle of Seattle" as "discursive trigger" for mobilisation processes on a global scale. The following events in Prague 2000 and Genoa 2001 also had a major impact on urban social movements in European cities. Furthermore, this mobilisation is linked to the diffusion of new "counter-cultural practices" in local protest settings, such as the collective use of new technologies and media tactics like the information platform "indymedia" as well as transnationally transmitted protest tactics like "pink and silver" blocks, the "Rebel Clown Army" or "Social Forums" (Marchart & Weinzierl 2006). Mayer (1998, 2003) and Harvey

(2000) diagnose similar transnational processes, but argue from a materialist or regulation theoretical perspective, studying the correlation between urban protest movements, regional policies and economic post-Fordist globalization processes within highly industrialized Western countries. The diagnosis thus is a similar one but the explanation differs. Leontidou (2010) stresses an integrated perspective highlighting the innovative transnational impact of Southern European protest politics and culture like popular squatting, the establishment of autonomous social centres and the development of social forums. The *fourth commonality* concerns the shared focus on ´the Right to the City´. Critical urban theory refers to topics such as free housing/squatting and protest against gentrification, surveillance and racialisation of ´new dangerous classes´ as constituting important foci of (above all autonomous/anarchist) urban protest (i.e. INURA 1998; Ronneberger and Lanz 1999). These issues largely correspond to the empirical examples of the radical democratic approach, albeit also with a different focus. Relating to discourse analysis, radical democrats point to the protests´ content and focus the cultural level. Newer approaches also refer to empiricism and thus to autonomous struggles that lead to a specific - political - production of urban protest space (Hamm 2002; Marchart 2004; Marchart & Weinzierl 2006). In this context it is interesting to note, that the two approaches´ also coincide on a level, which transcends the focus on movements and movement culture to a hegemonic level: In his book on counter-hegemonic spaces of hope Harvey (2000) relates to a discursive perspective to work out the possible changeability of the ´capitalist regime´ (of thought). He refers to the Foucauldian ´dispositif´ when he develops his notion of hegemonic ´spatiotemporal utopias´, which he characterizes as neo-liberal discourse embodied within the national settings of liberal nation-states. Harvey focuses on the geographic-social materiality/materialization of discourse and elaborates how discourse materializes within hegemonic (i.e. neo-liberal) and could possibly materialize within counter-hegemonic (i.e. communitarian and socialist) utopias. This leads further to the *fifth overlapping issue,* i.e. to the aim of political activism. It is for example no accident that Soja describes the approaches of Foucault and Lefebvre as an ´early spatialization of cultural politics´ (Soja, 1996: 84). Harvey (2000) stresses the necessity of emancipatory cultural practices in building anti-hegemonic ´spatio-temporal utopias´ and the introduction of a cultural and discursive approach to politics is also the aim of Laclau/Mouffe and their recipients. Furthermore, Harvey's description of the cultural level

of spatiotemporal utopias would correspond to notions of a radical democratic public. The question of the content of "emancipatory cultural practices" indicates the *sixth intersection*, where the approaches can be defined as complementary: Both refer to Critical Theory as the starting point for critical analysis and action, both refer to the necessity to include social processes in their analysis but both show certain omissions: The first focuses on radical democratic practices and culture without taking much into account the spatial realm and the material/ist component of the ´glocal´ protest settings. If "glocality" is addressed in radical democratic approaches it is done only in terms of reacting to a ´transnational discourse´ (Marchart & Weinzierl 2006). The latter focuses on a material spatiotemporal perspective, without really considering what counter-culture and counter-hegemonic practices actually look like (for a critical evaluation see: Mayer 2003). Nonetheless, on an empirical level both approaches are concerned with an analysis of ´spatiotemporal utopianisms´ and both define new social movements as possible materializations of such utopianisms and stress the necessity to build up and strengthen local counter-hegemonic spaces in a global world (for an explicitly empirical view see: Klaus 1998). According to Brenner and Keil (2003) it is the "Right to the City – approach" within movement research, which draws on the importance of local politics with focus on every-day life and the counter-hegemonic production of space. The radical democratic perspective on the other hand also emphasizes the importance of a counter-hegemonic "network of knowledge" for the organisation of protest (Marchart & Weinzierl 2006).

As the named intersections might indicate, an integrated perspective on urban potest would be fruitful. Critical urban theory could contribute a view on autonomous politics as politics of *space appropriation* and *space production* in a "glocal" urban environment, albeit always referring to critical theory as underlying signifier. Radical democratic approaches focus on this signifier and integrate a cultural studies´ perspective on movement politics as well as a discussion of the - historically shaped - meaning and content of radical democratic political discourse. Such an integrated approach would focus on materialist and cultural aspects of urban protest politics as it is reflected when looking at it empirically.

Julia Edthofer

This is how radical democracy looks like! Autonomous Urban Protest in Vienna

The route of the anti-racist demonstration on the 1ˢᵗ of May 2009 followed an imaginary line consisting of dots, in which racist murders occurred. During the march these spaces were transformed into politicised spaces of memory, scandalising the deadly consequences of structural racism in Austria. Such transnational anti-racist protest politics and space production has gained importance during the last decade; it demarcates a turning point in austrian movement politics and is embedded in a set of societal transformations. The period of time which is chosen for the empirical illustration, also corresponds to a period of important political transformations. It starts with the change in government in 1999– 2000, when the newly formed coalition between the conservative Austrian People´s Party (ÖVP) and the right-wing Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) brought about a strong and lasting reorganization of the political landscape. Furthermore, the last decade has shown the increasing importance of anti-racist protest politics, itself connected to international "no-border campaigns", which are a response to repressive EU migration and asylum policies and were triggered by the racist murders addressed on May 1ˢᵗ, 2009.

Starting the illustration of the last decade of urban protest in Vienna, the national setting and the development of the autonomous movement is briefly described. In the second half of the 20ieth century Austria is an economically very wealthy and politically calm country. Part of the austrian national identity after the Second World War is the collective suppression of the involvement in the Nazi regime. This is combined with the discursive construction of a "victimization myth", i.e. the shared collective belief of having been Nazi-Germanys first conquest and the importance of a "collective national effort" to regain economical and political stability in the post-war period (Musner/Maderthaner 2007; Uhl 2001). Economically, this period is regulated by Austro-Keynesianism installed by the government of chancellor Kreisky; the social-democrats enlarge the welfare state significantly and the regulation of production and consumption corresponds to the Fordist model. There is no considerable extra-parliamentary opposition in Austria following the events of 1968 and the first vital signs of such oppositional movement politics turn up with ecological protest and the development of an autonomous movement, which is mainly based in Vienna (Mattl 2007; Penz 2007). In 1975, the historical inner-city building

"Amerlinghaus" and in 1976 the former industrial slaughterhouse "ARENA" are temporarily squatted and subsequently transformed into autonomous cultural centres. In 1978 the first bigger ecological protest movement develops around the protest against the nuclear power plant "Zwentendorf" (Foltin, 2004). In the 1980ies an active autonomous squatting scene emerges and various squats are established throughout the city, of which the bigger ones like WUK (*Werkstätten und Kulturhaus*), ARENA, Amerlinghaus and EKH (*Ernst Kirchweger Haus*) are still existent. At present, the EKH is the largest autonomous social and cultural centre in Vienna; it is squatted in 1990, soon gets precarious user contracts and since then houses more than twenty political initiatives, including migrant organisations and asylum seeker support groups. The 1990ies are a period of retreat for movement politics; this holds especially true for autonomous contexts, which are subjected to a wave of state repression after a bomb attack in April 1995, which was directed against an electricity pylon in the lower-austrian municipial Ebergassing and should call attention to the threat of nuclear power (TATblatt +164, April 1995). At the end of the decade protest rises again with the mentioned racist murders and the change of government.

Since its emergence in the second half of the 20ieth century austrian autonomous urban politics addresses what is denominated as the Right to the City: It focuses on the ´right to inhabit on the one hand and the right to use and occupy urban space, to gather and to protest´ on the other (Leontidou 2010: 1181). As focal point of austrian urban protest, Vienna contains a counter-hegemonic network of autonomous political spaces, which provide the necessary spatial precondition for organizing politically. The Viennese counter-hegemonic rhizome consists of a network of different infrastructures like autonomous women's centres, mixed squats, trailer parks ("*Wagenplätze*"), free shops, autonomous counselling organisations for asylum-seekers, self-organised political clubs and bars, public libraries ("*Volxbibliotheken*"), etc.. This network of infrastructures houses a heterogeneity of political action groups and networks working on special issues like anti-racist action groups, anti-sexist action groups, the anti-capitalist MayDay network, the information network indymedia, etc. Although not negating the importance of spatial political infrastructure, I focus on temporary appropriations of urban space, because they can be regarded as "lynchpin" between autonomous heterotopias and mainstream society

and reflect the changing topics and issues of protest from an integrated theoretical perspective.

Transforming Urban Protest - From Fordism to Neo-Liberalism:

Autonomous protest politics demands the Right to the City and addresses topics such as free housing and law and order politics (Birke/Holmsted Larsen 2007). But activists also refer to prevailing political developments; they react to ´glocal´ political changes and integrate issues such as racism and ethnic profiling, gentrification and increasing surveillance in their protest. All the addressed political issues correspond to material/ist changes as well as to transnational hegemonic and counter-hegemonic political discourses and are linked to the transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist regulation system. Mayer (2003) distinguishes three major trends of change with regard to their impact on urban protest politics, namely the change from city "government" to "governance", the new role of cities as competitors in a global city ranking and the precarization and transnationalization of the workforce in major European cities. In the following, transformations of urban protest in Vienna are illustrated with recourse to her approach.

Co-Option as an Option:

The first trend regards formal political structures and points to the neoliberal shift from "state government" to "local governance", introducing a "deliberative" and "inclusive" form of city governance (Mayer 2003: 286). Concerning urban movement politics this change in the urban regime implies a paradoxical - or dialectical - process of co-opting certain initiatives and/or counter-hegemonic spaces on the one hand and criminalizing others, mostly the more radical ones (Mayer 1998). This leads to ambivalent effects for protest milieus, as protest can get neutralised when heterotopian protest spaces are co-opted. This happened to various Viennese cultural projects and the outcome is indeed ambivalent, because such co-opted spaces can still be important nodes of protest within the city. An example would be the WUK (*Werkstätten und Kulturhaus*), which started off as a squat in the beginning of the 1980s and turned into a highly subsidized cultural centre. On the one hand the WUK clearly lost its autonomous political impact during this process, but on the other hand it provides space for numerous political initiatives and events and houses

one of Vienna's oldest and largest autonomous feminist centres, the FZ (*Frauenzentrum*). This centre is not part of the WUK structure but exists independently within the building complex. The FZ is not subsidised by the city of Vienna but it can still benefit from money given to WUK and from the WUK infrastructure. Strategies of governing and co-opting dissent are accompanied, however, by a shift in political discourse concerning non-co-optable protest. This development is also stressed by della Porta in her analysis of the protest against the G8-summit in Genoa 2001 and afterwards. The author observes that the public perception of new social movements and the state reaction concerning the policing of protest reveal a shift from acceptance to an accentuation of a movement radicalisation and its dangers for society (della Porta 2006: 195). In Vienna the last decade also shows various waves of repressive state action concerning movement politics. In 1999/2000 a clear crashing of the newly arising transnational anti-racist mobilisation took place. Furthermore, state repression was also directed against animal rights activists in 2008 and 2010. Currently, drastic policing methods are observable during anti-racist protests against deportations, above all when attempts are made to prevent an ongoing deportation (GEMMI 2005; http://austria.indymedia.org/node/18490). Also on the local municipal scale the divide between "good" and "bad" protest is emphasized and "localised" (Ronneberger et al. 1999; Stadtrat 1998; for Vienna: Foltin 2004). In Vienna the "battle of the EKH" is one case where such a demonization of protest and concrete heterotopian spaces played a crucial role. The already mentioned EKH (*Ernst Kirchweger Haus*) is the largest autonomous social and cultural centre in Vienna. In 2004, the owner of the house – the Communist Party of Austria – sold it to a publicly known right-wing security company and the activists were threatened with eviction. After a long public struggle encompassing demonstrations, public interventions, press conferences, etc., a company with close contacts to the municipality of Vienna bought the building in July 2005, and the threat of eviction seems to have passed for now. The struggle to maintain the centre was supported by many austrian Left-wing artists and politicians, but more public attention was paid to a considerable anti-EKH campaign in the media during 2004.

Being located close to a giant urban renewal project centred on the reconstruction of the Viennese Main Station (the former *Südbahnhof*), the EKH currently could be once again endangered by the ongoing urban renewal process. This observation leads to the second

shift focused on by Mayer with a major impact on urban protest, namely gentrification processes and the political protest against them.

Resisting Neo-Liberal City-Face-Lifting:

An important feature of the economic transition to Post-Fordism is the new role of cities as competitive headquarters in a global city ranking (Mayer 1998, 2003; Sassen 1998 a, b). Contrary to political discourses during the period of Keynesian welfare-state interventionism that focussed on social issues, urban renewal is now to be "achieved via place-bound and spatially targeted redevelopment schemes" (Swyngedouw, Moulaert & Rodriguez 2002: 216). As the city itself became a sort of global player, its image plays an increasingly important role. Major cultural and sporting events satisfy its "spectacular needs" and are linked with an increasing trend towards "spectacle-oriented" urban renewal, which is in turn connected to gentrification processes as well as to "law and order" and "zero-tolerance politics" (Ronneberger et al. 1999; Dangschat 2001; for the Viennese case: Zinganel 2003).

With regard to urban movement politics these developments have led to an increasing focus on protest against gentrification processes that is mainly acted out by autonomous activists (Mayer 1998). It is a contested question whether the term "gentrification" can be applied to Vienna, where urban renewal does not lead to massive expulsions of marginalised − or to put it in clearer: subaltern − social groups and has only recently included huge restructuring processes of whole districts. Nonetheless such processes are visible and denominated as gentrification by autonomous activists, who explicitly criticize two developments: first, the accelerating renewal processes, which are concentrated on the two biggest train stations and their surroundings. Currently, it is above all the Viennese trailer park activists (*Wagenplatz – Gruppe Treibstoff*) and the action group "Platz da!?" who are broaching the issue of gentrification and the endangerment of alternative living projects. Until summer 2009 there was only one Viennese trailer park, located in the city suburbs. Since the local council chairman wanted to get rid of it, the activists bargained with the department for planning permission for an alternative site which they could inhabit temporarily. After six months of bargaining, the city council withdrew its initial offers in July 2009 and as a reaction the activists squatted two urban waste areas for the rest of the summer and had to leave both sites in October 2009. Since then they have been

evicted various times and are still looking for a site to stay. The whole process of eviction was accompanied by a quite fruitless media campaign in which the activists pointed to the sustainability of alternative living forms such as a trailer park and criticized gentrification in Vienna, which does not leave any sites left for alternative use.

Neo-liberal politics of urban renewal are accompanied by a discourse on "city-securitization" and by repressive trends in the policing of marginalised groups such as the homeless, beggars, sex workers, drug users and also the political public. In the last years, ethnizised social groups are depicted as groups that do not fit into the image of a secure and competitive global city. Such groups are discursively constructed as new dangerous classes and ´enemies of the state´ and are increasingly affected by ethnic profiling (Oberlechner und Schasiepen 2010). This development points to the third area of change stressed by Mayer, namely the growth of informal and precarious working sectors, which is linked to an increasing transnationalisation of the workforce, the construction of migration as security risk and the growing importance of anti-racist struggles.

Transnational Protest Politics and the Right to the Protest City:

Mayer, along with Sassen (2001), links the transnationalisation of the workforce with international migration movements. Both authors analyse this processes as leading to a growth in urban protest within the cities of the global North that touches on social issues and is linked to post-colonial anti-racist struggles. Both agree in their analysis of ´global cities´ as venues for the emergence of transnationalised social conflicts, connected to post-colonial continuities and Sassen furthermore stresses that the neoliberal ´new economic regime´ (Sassen 2001: IV) devaluates and informalises labour and leads to the emergence of ´new classes of disadvantaged workers´ – many of them being ´women, immigrants and/or people of colour´ (ibid. V). Migration movements from the global South to highly industrialized regions and above all the urban centres of the global North reshape cities, exclusive regulation politics and policies and development of a "securitization" framing of migration can be observed on a supra-national and national level as well as regarding local politics and produce new forms of protest. Furthermore, Sassen emphasizes its political potential as well as its potential for the development of a post-colonial, anti-racist counter culture. She introduces the notion of a ´strategic transnational space´ to denominate the discursive formation (and the contemporaneous materialisation) of such new, transnational

claims to the city, which make use of and hegemonize post-colonial political criticism within urban protest politics. This is exactly what happens in Vienna since the turn of the century and regarding movement politics this shift indicates an important re-orientation of political interventions launched by autonomous activists. Autonomous urban protest increasingly focuses on the Right to the City of marginalised groups (including political action groups) and its interweaving with anti-racist struggles. In Vienna there has been systematic autonomous protest after the establishment of so called "Protection Zones" (*Schutzzonen*) in 2004. Protection zones impede – often ethnicised - groups like sex workers, drug users and potential drug dealers to stay in public spaces nearby schools, churches and playschools. In 2004 a right-wing citizens' action group formed around Vienna's West Railway Station (*Westbahnhof*) and launched a campaign against sex work in the district. The citizen's initiative thereby exclusively concentrated on the necessity to control and prohibit "Black female sex work". The racist focus and the general trend to racialize social issues were addressed by autonomous activists and were subject of various political information events and protest.

As mentioned above, these illustrations indicate that autonomous politics has increasingly turned towards transnationalised politics and anti-racist action. The main focus of this protest concerns the European politics of racialised exclusion and the development of counter-concepts such as the Freedom of Movement and the Right to Stay. Apart from that, anti-racist protest refers to three racist occurrences that took place in 1999 and 2003. Two already mentioned incidents concerned the racist murders of the Nigerian asylum seeker Marcus Omofuma and the Mauritanian physicist Seibane Wague, the third regards the biggest racist police action in austrian history. These events had a considerable impact on autonomous protest politics in Vienna. On the one hand they triggered anti-racist campaigns and new transnational protest-networks; on the other hand they constitute main foci of anti-racist protest since a decade. In the following these events and their impacts on protest politics are described chronologically.

On the 1st of May 1999 the Nigerian asylum seeker Marcus Omofuma died during his deportation after the police tied him up and covered his mouth with tape. After his killing the African community in Vienna started to organise and protest publicly against the murder and racist harassments. In May 1999 for the first time in austrian movement history a big outreach of Black political resistance got visible on the streets. Contemporaneously,

networks between Black and white autonomous political action groups emerged and the anti-racist network "For a World Without Racism" (*Für eine Welt ohne Rassismus*) as well as the "austrian no-border network" were established - both of them located in infrastructures provided by the anti-racist wing of the autonomous scene. Initially, the main organisational work was done by activists who belonged to the African community. In May 1999 two large demonstrations and constant solemn vigils were organised and supported by white activists. However, this protest stopped quite soon as a consequence of the so called "Operation Spring". Operation Spring has been the largest police action in Austria since the foundation of the Second Republic after the Second World War. It was directed exclusively against Black African males, and rounded up 127 people suspected of being drug dealers. The police operation and the arrest of the accused persons were accompanied by a huge media defamation campaign that established the discursive image of the "Nigerian drug dealer", which was also imposed to the murdered Marcus Omofuma (http://no-racism.net/article/521/; GEMMI 2005, Krawagna 2005; Mößmer 2007). Empirical data shows that Operation Spring functioned very well as state tool to criminalize and smash the newly formed Black protest movement (http://no-racism.net/article/2905/; http://no-racism.net/article/848/). Indeed, the demonstrations, which were organised by the Black community stopped almost immediately after Operation Spring, due mainly to the fact that the leading activists were imprisoned. Protest went on, of course, but was mainly organised and led by white anti-racist action groups. The second racist murder with impact on organizing structures occurred in 2003 when Seibane Wague, a Mauritanian physicist, was killed during a police operation in which six police officers held him down by standing on his chest. Ambulance men present at the time injected Wague with a strong sedative and did not intervene. Their sentence in November 2005 pointed to the racist consensus within austrian politics, the judicial and the executive power: from ten accused persons eight policemen were discharged, the present doctor and one policeman were convicted to eight months of suspended sentence. As the killing of Marcus Omofuma, the murder of Seibane Wague was explained - and thus implicitly legitimated - by officials and in the media with recourse to racist stereotyping of the victims as "hyper-aggressive Black men" (Collins, 2004) who had been endangering the officials during the police interventions. These racist incidents are only two within a long history of racist oppression and endangerment of people with African background and they

became the triggering factors for the African community to strengthen political self-organisation. After Seibane Wagues death another wave of activism was organised and in October 2003 the Black Womens´ Community (*Schwarze Frauen Community - SFC*) was founded. Two co-founders of the SFC relate to these murders and their personal concernment as the most important motivational factors for their political self-organisation and thus denominate their activism as self-defence against structural racism.

Anti-racist protest in the years following Operation spring was mainly organised by white anti-racist activists and long discussions about the necessity to protect Black people during demonstrations took place[1]. Sassens notion of the ´strategic transnational´ space therefore has to be reformulated regarding two different layers. First, Mayer's proposal to look empirically ion protest and local political opportunity structures is to be stressed. Second, from an intersectional point of view they furthermore vary significantly *within* one urban setting according to the activists' *ethnicised background* and *legal status* (Messinger 2010). This observation points to the question who has the Right to the Heterotopian Protest City. The possibility to articulate protest in the public is not the same for everybody: people with a migration background and/or a precarious legal status do not face equal opportunities to build up a radical democratic counter-public at demonstrations and if they do, they bear a much higher risk when subjected to state repression. The empirical example from Vienna emphasizes this fact in illustrating the repression, which immediately followed the uprising of the Black community in Vienna in 1999. The notion of a post-colonial, transnational counter-culture is important in order to impede a victimization of people of colour and/or with migration background, but the empirical case shows on the other hand that – on the level of hegemonic state discourses - African or Black political activists were soon and easily constructed as major enemies of the (austrian nation) state. Together with the concrete – and material - state repression, post-colonial and anti-racist struggles were severely endangered and partly destroyed. Concluding, it can be stressed that an empirical look on "post-colonial urban struggles" immediately reveals differing levels of oppression and differing Rights to the Protest City, shaped by cultural and discursive processes of ethnicisation and racist stereotyping as well as by the materiality of structural racism, for example via the category of "citizenship".

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[1] This information is drawn out of an interview with the white anti-racist activist B

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Concluding Remarks:

Summing up the discussion above it can be stated that autonomous activists formulate criticism and - by using their bodies as instruments - transform urban space in creating radical democratic publics. Such issues are very well addressed by radical democratic theoretical approaches. What these approaches leave out however, is the importance of material/ist issues concerning activists´ positionalities. The materialist level can be integrated when intersectional viewpoints and critical urban theory are taken into account. Such views point to the activists´ embedment in state-run ´axes of inequality´ (Klinger/Knapp 2007) and stress the fact that not everybody has the equal Right to the Protest City. Furthermore, radical democratic theory only recently glimpses at the production of a rhizomatic counter-hegemonic protest space. However, a crucial feature of radical democratic publics is the fact that they politicise and transform the spaces they occupy during demonstrations. In this context, counter-hegemonic political niches play an important role in providing space for the "protest bodies" to articulate their critique and in providing spaces for the set up of solidarity-bound communicative protest networks, which are of crucial importance for political mobilisation processes. This is even more the case, when the protest is a spontaneous and urgent one, where people have to be mobilised within a short period of time. This is f. i. what happened at the 29th of April 2010, when between 300 and 400 people gathered together within a few hours to impede the deportation of two Nigerian soccer players, who are active in the anti-racist political soccer club "Sans Papiers" (see: http://www.fcsanspapiers.org/; http://no-racism.net/article/3406/; http://at.indymedia.org/node/18058). Of course this could not have happened without the use of so called "short-message-chains", but the chains could not have been established without the regular gathering of activists and politically interested people in political venues and their willingness to join local information lists. Also, the spontaneous political intervention would not have happened if there would not be a certain sense of solidarity within the scene and towards the affected "Sans Papiers". Such spontaneous "direct actions" are on the one hand the product of an infrastructure, which allows it to spread political information within a very short time. On the other hand they are possible due to constant political work throughout years, which of course requires heterotopian spaces. The materialist perspective of critical urban theorists emphasises such spatial aspects of protest. Furthermore, it addresses the ´glocality´ of protest and points to the relevance of

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political opportunity structures, which themselves are embedded in national and supra-national economic, legal and social structures. What this approach does not address however, is the cultural and discursive influence on movement identities and the specific contents and concrete functionality of radical democratic practices. It is the radical democratic and cultural studies´ perspective with its ethnographic focus that grasps concrete political and social protest - practices.

Closing the discussion on anti-racist protest within the autonomous political scene in Vienna such practices can be observed. Generally, the political action scene can be described as a „white middle-class scene" with austrian background. Since the events in 1999/2000 new protest formations emerged and migration, racism and transnational politics are increasingly discussed within the scene. Ever since, racism as well as whiteness[2] within the autonomous scene have been and still are important points of discussion and point to hegemonic struggles and thus to a radical democratic process of change within the scene. In other words, a transnational political space in which a postcolonial, anti-racist political discourse is developed and put into practice, is partly observable. To grasp and synthesize the two mentioned perspectives, namely to look at concrete political practices and their transformations however, it is important to look empirically at social movements. Enforcing ethnographical works on concrete movement settings would help to link theoretical approaches to a concrete urban movement setting and to reveal forms and content of urban protest as well as heterotopian spaces. As the role of autonomous street politics tends to get marginalised and underplayed within mainstream movement research this seems to be even more important. Because there *is* autonomous urban protest in Northern European cities just as there is a vital and active autonomous political action scene in Vienna. This form of urban protest politics importantly contributes to public political discussions in pointing to societal antagonisms and reclaiming the Right to the City and the formulated criticism is to be strengthened and supported via solidary analyses and discussions.

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[2] Whiteness is a term borrowed from critical whitenes studies and discusses being „white" as being in a priviliged social position.

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